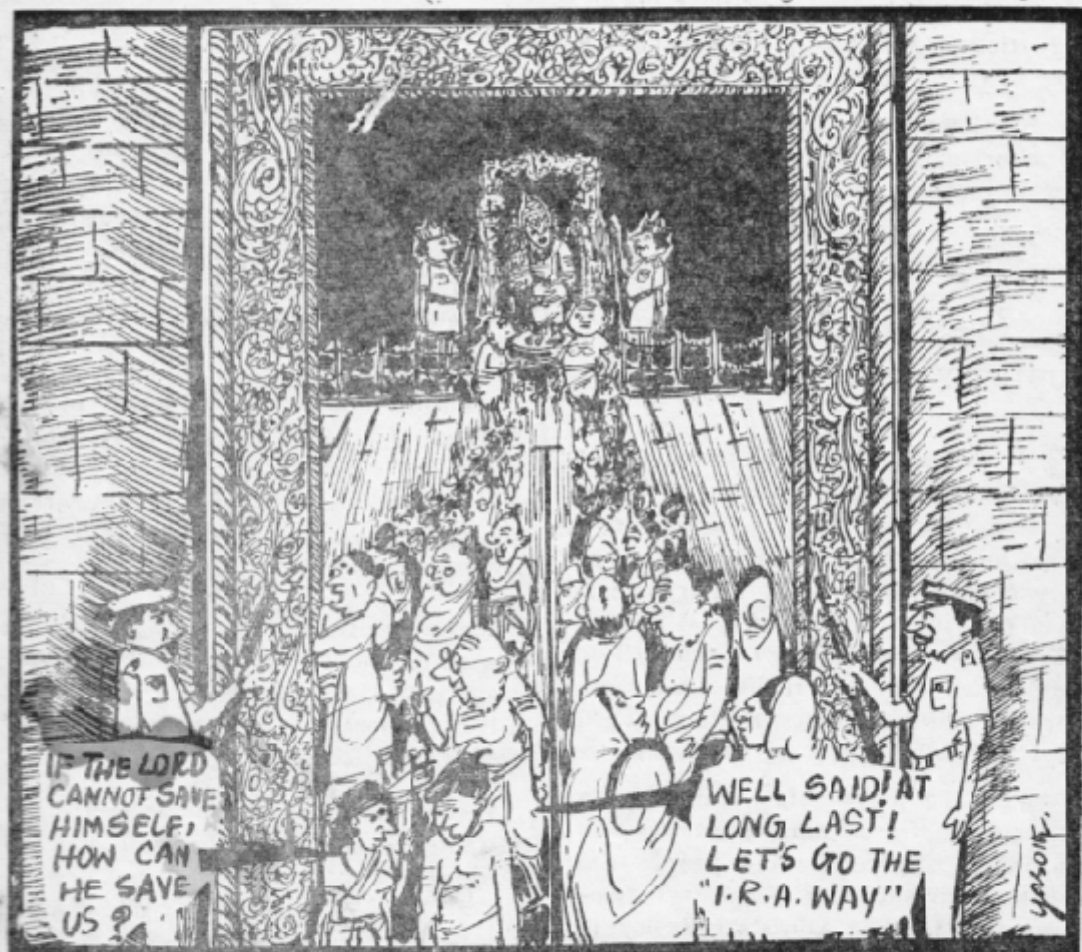


Free thought

The Largest Circulated Rationalist Monthly

May, 1979.

80 Paise



Police Protection For "Omnipotent God" !

(See Page 158)

Vol. IX No 5

Annual Subscription Rs. 9/-

REASON THINKS; RELIGION DREAMS.

Letters . . .

YOUR MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN

Sir,

We are so pleased to read accounts of your noble efforts in the cause of emancipation of the human mind. Your organisation and literature are well known over here through Humanist and Rationalist bodies working.

Your journal issues are full of illuminating articles. Very kindly keep us on the Mailing List. We are immensely interested.

Your thought-provoking questionnaire, 'God Checkmated' is in circulation here and has attracted serious thinking.

T. ANSELL, DACCA
(Bangla Desh)

* * *

SUBTLETY OF NOMENCLATURE

Sir,

In his article 'What is Rationalism?' Mr. A. Suryanarayana has sought to define the Trinity—Agnosticism, Atheism and Rationalism. With regard to Agnosticism, nobody could dispute about his argument. But I do not see eye to eye with what he says about Atheism. That an atheist can believe in astrology, palmistry, rebirth, soul etc, despite his belief in the nonexistence of god seems to me both illogical and irrational.

Rationalism plays a significant role in moulding a man freed from superstition and belief in God. There are a few people who profess themselves to be rationalists but believe in one god. And Atheists believing in superstition and rationalists believing in the existence of god are microscopic. As a matter of fact, they do not deserve the names at all.

It is generally accepted that the contribution of Rationalism for the state of Atheism could not be underestimated.

Rationalism is the foundation while Atheism is the superstructure. Rationalism and Atheism are indivisible.

To separate one from the other will sow confusion in the minds of people.

—A. Sivalingam, Trichy.

* * *

DONATION OF EYES, OTHER ORGANS AND THE DEAD BODY.

Sir,

I am forwarding to you my declaration duly executed by me in the presence of my wife, Dr. Sudha Saraiya, MBBS, D.G.O., C.F.P. and that of my friend, Mr. Madhusudan Krishnaji Samant

I am presently running 62 years in age. I suffered Myocardial Infraction in April/May 1977, when I had already made a brief declaration which contained the gist of the present one, which is exhaustive and legally worded.

Please confirm the receipt of the Declaration and advise me of the further precautions and procedures to be adopted for timely implementation of all the requirements stressed in my Declaration.

I will welcome if you publicize my declaration which may enthruse others to follow suit

—Y. A. LOKHANDWALA,
BOMBAY

[It is hoped that the noble example set by the President of IRA would be emulated by others—Ed.]

"Missionaries are perfect nuisances and leave every place worse than they found it."

—Charles Dickens.

(1812—1870)

English Novelist.

Free thought

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THE CAUSE OF THE COW

The Eighty four year 'Saint' of Panuar and the high priest of Sarvodaya had staged another of his 'deshseva' stunts. A much publicised fast-unto death ended in a fiasco five days later with the 'Acharya' sipping milk from one his misguided henchmen.

Meanwhile the stage managed show whipped up communalist feelings elsewhere and Jamshedpur was smouldering. Hindu revivalist forces reared their ugly head and some of these sought comfort in the proposed Anti conversion bill euphemistically called the 'freedom of religion bill'. Two Chief Ministers heading responsible ministries air dashed to Panuar. The two CMs when they pleaded—more out of courtesy than conviction—that the fast be postponed by a year were reportedly snubbed back "Why one year? Get a letter from the Almighty that I would live for one year". Thus was the crude and boorish reply of a senile "Acharya" to two popularly elected men. No wonder the god's own emissary chose to scorn the peoples representatives!



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Madras-600 008

Editor.

C. A. SESHADRI

"DURAGRAHA"

All rationalists know that Anti cow-slaughter is a totally irrational cause. There can be no two sides to it, as in the case of prohibition for example. But what strikes one is not the total contempt of Mr. Bhave for norms of decent behaviours as his coercive tactics to enforce his pet idiosyncrasy on the millions of people for whom beef is a cheap source of protein food. 'Satyagraha' in the context in which it was evolved by Gandhi was to secure the rights of people. Not to deny the rights of any section. And Bhave seeks to deny the 40% non-Hindus of Kerala and millions more their right to a diet. The Acharya's action can only be termed "Duragraha" and coercion.

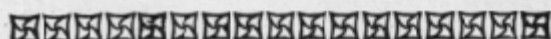
Economists of repute including Dr. K. N. Raj have disputed the stupendous claim that millions of enfeebled cows can be fed in 'Goshalas' which the acharya conjures. Nor do they agree that the farm economy will receive a boost from these redundant cattle!

If the Acharya does not think it fit to champion the cause of the homo sapiens he should have championed the cause of all dumb creatures. He could for example have fought for humane slaughtering methods for all animals killed for food. Pigs are slashed all over and sometimes spiked with red hot iron through the anus. Mr. Bhave could as well meet the Regard of Regadpura in Delhi who slaughters pigs thus and teach of them Ahimsa. But Mr. Bhave seems to think that Ahimsa is a synonym for coercion!

The preference for the cow is based on mythology. It can not be supported by reason. And the gate-crashing which some of the political parties have attempted at this new found cause is not the least intriguing considering the fact that they are led by

demagogic leaders. Mr. Gandhi has now come in open support of a total ban on cow slaughter. Does she have a truck with the Acharya whose blessings and parleys she frequently seeks? Or was she paying back for the acharya's elated 'clap' of hands during his 'mounavrata' when he heard that Mrs. Gandhi had won at Chickamagalur?

It all seems part of a larger plot. Part of the Vajpayee-Advani-Vinoba-R.S.S. Association. You can figure it for yourself! The O. P. Thyagi Eill, Jamshedpur clashes and now the Morarjis' assurance on a nationwide cow-slaughter! Vinobas' antics seem part of a sinister plot to pull the nation along the obscurantist R.S.S. way.

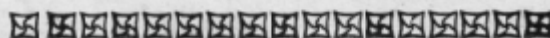


Dr. H. NARASIMHAIAH ANSWERS

We are extremely happy to announce that Dr. H. Narasimhaiah, Former Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, who has recently joined Indian Rationalist Association as a Patron Member has kindly consented to answer Reader's doubts and questions. Dr. H. Narasimhaiah asserts "I am convinced that ultimately it is Rationalism that is going to prevail". And he is ready to do his best for this cause. Readers are therefore requested to avail this opportunity and send their questions on Science, Philosophy, Rationalism, etc. for his expert comments.

Please address your questions to:

Dr. H. Narasimhaiah
C/o. Freethought
53/17, Pantheon Road,
Madras-600 008



Readers' Forum

DOES GOD EXIST?

I read the letter by Mr. V. Sequeira in **FEETHOUGHT**, February 1979 issue. Here are my comments.

Mr. V. Sequeira thinks that comments are superfluous and still be found it necessary to pass comments on views in **FEETHOUGHT**.

He should note that every child can learn to speak without the help of the 'God' or any supernatural power. Then why not the ape also learn without the help of 'God'?

The only difference is that the child learns the same within 1-2 years, which took thousands of years for the ape to talk. Historians like late V. K. Rajwade have proved, how a language developed in its present form. At first there were vowels only. Lower animals also, do produce some sounds to express their feelings. What the primitive man did was that, he heard various sounds in the nature and started reproducing them and symbolising them etc. Any language has organised efforts for years to give it the present form.

Having nature and having a pair of shoes cannot be compared. Any natural thing one can just pick up from nature. But pair of shoes means changing natural raw materials with the help of tools. If one wants to have Nature in a changed form one will have to work hard, and the 'god' will not come to help for mending shoes or changing natural material into sophisticated articles. 'Having' shoes means not just picking some object but changing a natural object into a sophisticated article.

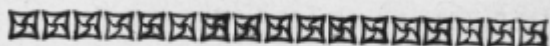
About 'leaving it no Nature to form atheist books' Why these people think that 'man' is different from the 'Nature'? He is no outsider. He is a part of Nature. Man writing books - is it not a 'Natural' process. I may be permitted to ask why not the theists leave to 'god' the production of holy books and literature?

Agreed that for an organised thing an intelligent design is necessary. But this argument does not imply that it is a heavenly or supernatural design.

Hypothesis of 'god' or supernatural power is not only illogical but also it does not explain ANY phenomenon of Nature satisfactorily, nor does it solve any problem. On the contrary it gives an excellent tool in the hands of vested interests for exploitation of gullible down trodden masses. It comes in the way of the development and progress of society at large. No religion has given any solace to the slightest extent to its poor followers.

Atheist explanations are logical, scientific and aimed towards wellbeing of society. Therefore supernatural - theist theories must be discarded outright.

Rajeev Joshi, Bombay.



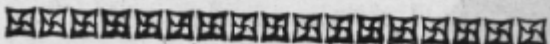
SPECIAL ISSUES.

The forthcoming issues of **FEETHOUGHT** will be devoted to the following subjects:

- June 1979 issue — Science and Scientific outlook.
- July 1979 Issue — Muslims.
- August 1979 issue. Children.

Articles, jokes, cartoons and other material for publication may kindly be sent to us latest by 5th of the preceeding month.

— Editor



NEWS AND NOTES

DELHI RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION:

The Delhi Rationalist Association held two public meetings on 4th and 25th March 1979.

In the first meeting Shri John Palparamban, M.A., Ph.D., a professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University presented his paper on "Religion as an exploitative structure". Dr. Palparamban, a christian priest, who later shed away religion and became an ardent rationalist, narrated his experience as a Jesuit priest also. In the discussions that followed Mr. Kanju, the Editor of Caravan, Mr. Sharma, Secretary of Radical Humanists of Delhi and Mr. Ajoy Srivastava actively participated. Shri Edamaruku, Secretary, DRA presided over the meeting.

In the Second meeting held on 25th of March 1979, Mr. Samal Edamaruku and Mr. Ajoy Srivastava presented their papers on "State and Religion". Mr. Samal covered the historical development of State and Religion. In view of their collaboration and contradiction, Mr. Ajoy explained the Marxist theory of the origin and nature of state and Religion. He also explained how both these became tools of exploitation. Mr. Devassikutty former Secretary of DRA, presided over the meeting. Messrs. Indrapal Sethi, K. P. Prakasam, and Varadaraj were

among those who actively participated in the discussion.

In the meeting Shri Edamaruku Secretary moved a resolution demanding the lift of ban on cow slaughter in all the Indian states. The resolution congratulated the governments of Kerala and West Bengal for their courageous stand in not banning cow slaughter. The resolution also requested the Central Government not to pressurise these states in this regard. The resolution continues:

"It is not the Governments but the individuals who should decide what type of food they should take. If the Central Government continues pressurising the state Governments of Kerala and West Bengal to ban cow slaughter, the Delhi Rationalist Association decides to observe a token Satyagraha in front of the residence of the Prime Minister of India.

* * * *

THE No. 13 HOODOO:

The following is a news item from 'The Times of India' dated 29-1-79 under the above caption.

Bangalore, January 28 (PTI) —Number 13 proved to be an unlucky number for a tunnel on the Hassan—Mangalore railway line under construction now.

The tunnel faced repeated hazards. The hill near the mouth once collapsed and blocked entry completely. Several times portions of the tunnel caved in.

"Subsequently, the number of the tunnel was changed to 12-A." Mr. S. Sesha-dri, an executive engineer, told a party of pressmen who visited the project recently.

DOWNRIGHT SUPERSTITIONS :

It is human tendency to shift the blame. The reason for caving in of the tunnel is attributed to the inauspicious number of the tunnel (13). As the officer-in charge of the project, Mr. S Seshadri is answerable for the failure of the tunnel. It is therefore, only natural that he sought to shift the blame to the inauspicious number of the tunnel. Still, one can blame him for his omission to consult an astrologer or a soothsayer before starting the tunnelling operation, in logical conformity to his way of thinking !

Engineering is a science. Boring rocks for making tunnels falls within the engineering disciplines of Geology and Civil Engineering. Surely these branches of science can explain the reasons for the failure and based on the same, responsibility could be fixed on someone for his omission or commission. Without resorting to such a post mortem the Executive Engineer tries to find a scapegoat. It is most unbecoming on the part of an Executive Engineer to give such an unscientific and superstitious reason for his failure.

G. Viswanathan, Bombay.

* * * *

**CHILD SACRIFICED TO TRIBAL DEITY
JAGDALPUR, April 5**

A 2 year old orphan child was sacrificed to a tribal village deity by a priest for better crops and success in hunting in the interior of South Bastar district on February 24, last, Police Superintendent A. N. Singh disclosed.

SCHOOL HAUNTED BY SPIRITS

BANGKOK, March 27

A group of 40 exorcists, gathered from all over Thailand by a newspaper, yesterday converged on a rural school in northern Thailand where local people have reported evil spirits have possessed girls attending classes.

Residents of Chon Phrai village in Phe chagun province have kept their daughters away from the local school after nine girls, whom they said were attacked by unknown spirits, experienced blackouts and indulged in violent behaviour in class during the last few weeks.

Local exorcists and Buddhist monks have so far failed to drive away the spirits.

Yesterday's trip was organised by the big circulation Thai Raath newspaper which first reported the story.

* * * *

JAIN MONKS INITIATED

Madras —

Three young Jains belonging to the Bwetambar sect—Sri Hershah Kumar, Kumari Vasanthi and Kumari Pragna—were initiated to the monastic order at a function held at the Dadavadi Jain temple at Ayanavaram.

They were given white dress symbolising monkhood in the presence of Ancharya Vikrama Suriswarji and Acharya Navin Suriswarji. Thousands of Jains witnessed the initiation.

Earlier the three young Jain nuns who renounced worldly pleasures, were taken in a colourful procession to the temple.

Let us hope that the Jain Community of Madras will initiate three virile young men as monks to keep them company !

BURNING OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS :

The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Bhupesh Gupta by Mr. W. A. Lokhandwala, President of I.R.A. on the ISSUE OF BURNING OF HINDU RELIGIOUS BOOKS by a section of the people.

The main purpose of my writing this letter is my reaction to the waiting and weeping over the public burning of Hindu Holy Books like Gita, Mahabharat etc. by extremists in Manipur as published on Page 11, New Age, Vol. XXVII No. 12, March 25, 1979, under the caption "Manipur Official Patronage of Secessionism & Communalism". Why should a political party wedded to scientific socialism lament over the burning of books of any religion, which are based on the primal falsehood of illusory existence of so called god and themes derived and woven around it ? And dragging therein Com. Mao for condemnation is really deplorable.

"The mankind rotting miserably in the bondage of Illusion of God, soul, rebirth etc. propagated by all the religions which have served as protectors of the exploiting class, should now be liberated and for that liberation, if necessary, all the religious books be burnt as was done by Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy in Tamilnadu. Earlier it is done, better understanding and implementation of scientific socialism will be achieved".

DELHI CHALO :

Does anybody know that for all practical purposes Nagpur is no more the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ? Most

reliable sources of Jhandewalan Building in the capital indicate that the RSS has begun to operate from the capital. Formerly the Number Two in the RSS hierarchy always stayed at Nagpur to look after the administration. But the present General Secretary, Mr. Rajendra Singh, is permanently stationed in Delhi and all the important RSS conclaves are held here. The existing stocks of publicity material are being transferred for Nagpur to Delhi.

RELUCTANT SANGHI :

Foreign Minister Vajpayee, we learn had no intention of attending the annual RSS meeting at the Ramilla grounds which was addressed by the RSS chief, Balasaheb Deoras. Mr. Vajpayee, has been keeping himself aloof from all RSS jamborees. But his colleagues like Mr. Advani and others of the erstwhile Jana Sangh prevailed upon him to change his mind to show himself at the meeting. Mr. Vajpayee finally gave in because as his close associates said he did not want to give the impression to anyone that the present day detractors of the organisation led by Mr. Raj Narain, had succeeded in making a dent in the Jana Sangh constituent in the Janata.

RACIAL ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION IN NAMIBIA

The South African authorities, whose economy is actually built on forced labour, are practising racial discrimination in economic activities in Namibia. By a law aimed at continued control by whites over the mining industry, Africans are allowed non-skilled jobs in the industry.

According to a recent survey commissioned by the British Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, the Namibia,

mining industry provides employment for about 20,000 people, 96 per cent of whom are African contract labourers. But in 1973 the 24.4 million rand paid out in wages was allocated on a ratio of about 6:1 between white and African employees.

Similar disparity in the level of remuneration is reflected in per capita income figures. In 1962 the average annual income of each person in the predominantly white area was estimated to be 352 rand as compared with 17 rand in the northern areas, where 70 per cent of the African population is domiciled. The official figures for 1967 followed the same pattern, the whites receiving an income of 1,602 rand as compared with 61 rand for Africans in the northern part of the territory.

The commercial economy is confined to the southern sector of the territory, i.e. the white area. This area comprising two-thirds of the land area of Namibia, contains most of the mineral resources, land suitable for animal husbandry, diamond areas, towns, ports and communication infrastructure. In the remaining third of the territory, comprised of both former "African reserves" inside the white area and the northern "black homelands", economic activities are principally on a subsistence level, arising from small-scale stock-rearing and the growing of maize and millet.

— Courtesy : Beijing Review
23-3-79.

* * *

SEQUEL TO TEMPLE EPISODE— MINISTER QUILTS.

The State Minister of Panchayati Raj, Mr. M. Baga Reddy, resigned from the Andhra Pradesh cabinet.

Mr. K. E. Krishnamurthy, parliamentary secretary to the Panchayat Raj Minister, also submitted his resignation. The Chief Minister is yet to accept the resignation.

The resignations followed the Mantralayam episode in which a Harijan M.L.A., Mr. Eranna, was denied entry into Raghavendra Swami Temple at Mantralayam in Kurnool district in November.

Mr. Baga Reddy and Mr. Krishnamurthy were present in the temple when the incident occurred.

The Eranna issue was raised in the Assembly last month and both the houses of Legislature were adjourned for the day as a mark of protest.

A house committee has also been constituted by the Assembly to probe the incident. The committee has not yet completed its work.

In the meanwhile, an action committee of all scheduled castes and tribes organisations has given a call for a mammoth march to the Assembly. Among the demands of the action committee is the resignation of Mr. Baga Reddy.

More than 500 harijans led by several legislators belonging to all communities made a symbolic entry into the Mantralayam temple.

* * *

* HARIJAN MARCH ON ASSEMBLY :

In response to a call given by the action committee of the different scheduled castes and scheduled tribe organisations in Hyderabad, a huge procession was taken out to the State Assembly to protest against the Eranna incident at Mantralayam.

Police took abundant precautions to prevent any incident and deployed a heavy contingent of armed as well as mounted police near the Sanjivayya statue where the procession was intercepted.

The procession started from the Ambedkar statue on the Tank Bund Road. Leaders of various organisations garlanded the statue of Dr. Ambedkar.

The Congress-I Legislator from the Alur reserved constituency in Kurnool district, Mr. Eranna, who triggered off the temple entry controversy, also garlanded the statue and told the gathering that he was fighting for the cause of his people.

The processionists raised slogans demanding a judicial committee in place of the house committee, the dismissal of the Panchayat Raj Minister, Mr. Boga Reddy and the arrest of Manthralayam temple pujaris.

The procession considerably swelled as it marched towards the Assembly via Liberty Bkshlr Bagh, Gunfoundry and the State Bank.

After garlanding Sanjivayya's statue at the terminal point the processionists set fire to an effigy of the 'caste devil' (Kula Rakshana) amidst slogans.

A 10-member delegation presented memoranda to the Speaker and the Chief Minister demanding a judicial inquiry into the temple episode as they had no faith in the house committee.

Mrs. Eashwari Bal, the leader told the Speaker that the Congress-I had come to power with the massive vote of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes but they were denied justice in many matters and atrocities on them continued.

ANOTHER TEMPLE EPISODE:

Yet another instance of alleged denial of temple entry to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe devotees was brought to the notice of the Chief Minister of Andhra Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, and the Speaker, Mr. Divi Kondai5h Chowdary, today.

According to the members of a delegation who presented a memorandum on the Mantralayam incident scheduled caste devotees were denied entry into a siva temple in Anantapur town on Mahasivaratri day.

It is alleged that about 50 sub-inspector trains of the Police Training College at Anantapur were denied entry into the temple when it was known they belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribe.

The disappointed devotees sought reasons from the temple authorities in writing for their action. The authorities are understood to have given a letter explaining the reasons for the action.

* * * *

DUTCH COMPANY FILMS ON RAJNEESH ASHRAM DESPITE BAN!

A Dutch television company has reportedly jumped the Govt. ban and shot a film on the activities of the Rajneesh Ashram. The B. B. C. had earlier been refused permission to make a T. V. film on the Ashram.

The Dutch company had employed high quality 'super-eight' film equipment normally used by tourists. After smuggling out the film, the company converted it into 16 mm and showed it on T. V. there!

The Government should immediately investigate how the Dutch company could hoodwink Government intelligence and make

The Vacuum Argument Myth, Mystery or Fact?

—D. K. Narayanan

(Contd. from April Issue)

LEARNING :

Relevant to the present study, the most important aspect among other things, requiring further elucidation is learning. Learning is primarily a process of conditioning. That is to say, by conditioning one acquires mannerisms, builds up knowledge and entertains beliefs.

EFFECTIVE RESULT :

But the effective result of conditioning depends upon the environment in which conditioning takes place. The stimuli from without determine the nature of knowledge, belief and understanding.

It has been explained already, how a child is born on to this earth with limited and specific permanent nerve connections called instincts. These are hardly sufficient for the new-born child to survive. However, as days pass by, more and more conditioned nerve connections are formed to equip the organism and to ensure its equilibration with the environment. Thus the formative stages of childhood bear extreme importance in so far as religiosity, beliefs, superstitions, etc., are

concerned. During the formative stages, the stimuli emanating from the social environment encounter no obstruction and as a result powerful conditioned reflexes are formed in the cerebral hemispheres which govern the individual's behaviours and beliefs. Such strongly formed conditioned reflexes determine the future course of an individual's existence. This indicates the oft-repeated relevance of imparting sound education to growing children.

BUT ALAS :

In our society which laden with all sorts of ills, superstitious beliefs and obscurantistic practices, with reference to gods, goddesses, ghosts, castes, religions, race-considerations, class-distinctions and disparities, no child is born free to have sound upbringing. In such a predicament, the condition of children born of superstitious parents need not be stressed ! The child will imbibe the superstitious pursuits of its parent. It will start worshipping the deities, learning the rituals, observing the religious practices and believing the imaginary stories as the parent does.

Children brought up in the environment afforded by capitalism will be forming the capitalist behaviours and outlook, and the children brought up by proletariat labourers will have attitudes and qualities akin to working class conscience.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The - 'THE VACCUM ARGUMENT' MYTH, MYSTERY OR FACT?' is concluded with this issue. Readers' comments on the article are invited—Ed.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

In the 'Hindu Varna Vyavastha', it explains why children of 'brahmin parents' of acute caste consciousness, start observing untouchability apparently of their own without special training in that respect. It is in the same way the children of 'low-castes, the 'chandalas and Chamars' build up inferiority and shoddy personality.

In the beginning the child learns only through the first signal system, of sight, gestulations, sounds et al. Every movement, expression and behaviour of the parent or of the person with whom the child comes into contact with, lends its impact on the development of conditioned reflexes vis-a-vis learning. Later in the course of further growth, the child develops second signal system and with that the learning process of the child attracts more importance. All the complexities involved in the formation of attitudes and beliefs covering various behaviours become the direct result of language. The stimuli conveyed by or through written and spoken words reach the central hemispheres presenting definite conditions for the development of concrete and specific 'mental' attitudes. The words spoken by the people around (that is of the social environs) the words written in books and other printed materials which are read, complete, the individuals intellectual growth, with reference to his behaviours, facts, etiquetteness, attitudes, beliefs and the moral and social standing.

In the context of the above generalisation a few questions of importance emerge.

Should every child born in superstitious environs grow up into superstitious believers? Were not majority of the present-day rationalists, atheists, humanists, agnostics and secularists once religious? were not they too observing superstitious, ritualistic practices?

CASE OF RATIONALISTS:

Answer to all these questions is in the affirmative. History is replete with examples where children of hard-core religionists, vicar-generals and priests had turned out to be rationalists and atheists who vehemently propagated the sanity, truth and glory of atheism, condemning at the same time, the stupidity of religious beliefs. Ingersoll was the son of a priest. Nearer home, father of late Dr. Abraham T. Koor was the Vicar general of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, the late very Reverend Koor Eipe Thoma Kathanar. Similarly, a good majority of present day rationalists in India were born in families of orthodox religious people and were brought up by family members who are superstitious in belief and practice.



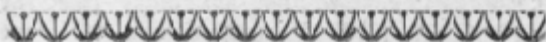
CUPID WINS. POPE LOSES:

Over 32,000 catholic priests have reportedly left their orders since 1964. And most of them did so in order to get married.

The Pope was reportedly lamenting over the fact that the priests had left after taking their vows to remain celibate all their life!

The priests naturally couldn't do without sex all their lives! And this was to be expected. When will the Pontiff living in pompous style at the Vatican palace relent in the matter?

The Pope, Beware! It was a sex starved catholic priest who made sister Mameen pregnant! And many more such cases go unreported. The only way out seems to be for the Catholic church to ensure that all priestly recruits are castrated!



What explains such transformation? What is the mechanism by which changes in beliefs, behaviour and outlook take place? Will not in the process of the transformation (when the old set of beliefs and attitudes are replaced by new ones) a sort of vacuum be left in the 'mind'?

There is nothing miraculous or unnatural about these transformations in brain development. First of all, it indicates the importance of the second signal system in the making of forceful conditioned reflexes capable of replacing the nerve connections already formed in the cerebral cortex in the early stages of growth. Secondly, it shows the diversity of the sources of stimuli from environments, which imparts unrestricted influence on the brain development. The words spoken by friends, class-mates, play-mates, teachers and elders the words written in letters, books and other printed materials, the information conveyed by or through pictures, paintings, monuments, stories and events of diverse nature and tense act upon the cerebral hemispheres through the sense organs. These stimuli, depending upon the "Type" and of the particular relationship between the first and the second signal systems, vouch for the changes which ensure the nature of intellectual growth referred to in the above paragraph — once religious, superstitious men become atheists because these stimuli are conducive for empirical objective and realistic evaluations and conclusions!

At this juncture it should not be discounted that the transformation can, to a very limited extent, be in the other way around too. For example, an unconformed agnostic may sometimes turn out into a shabby theist in later years but this possibility though very rare, accounts for the weak

conditioning which was diminished for lack of supplementation. Their environs and the stimuli were idealistic. In the background of the congenial build up of their brain, these people would be easily carried away into the comforts of intellectual passivity provided by theism.

In determining human nature "type" and "relationship" of "signal system" hold important possibilities. But the part played by environments should not be understood on any score. The congenial factors such as those determining "type" etc., remaining, new line of thinking and behaviour are established by the stimuli which come from diverse sources in the environments and by the resultant conditioned reflexes.

Well, this is the interesting background. The processes of conditioning, deconditioning and building up of newer and newer conditioned reflexes account for all aphasias called the "mental development" of an individual. But what a complexity of actions these!

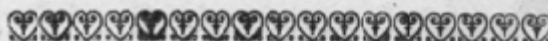
So be! Concluded



WORLD CENTRE FOR LEARNING ASTROLOGY.

The all India Astrology and Yoga Conference has decided to take up a Rs 1.4 crore project to establish at Ujjain and international centre for learning astrology, Sanskrit and Karma Kand (the science of Karma) according to Mr. Kallash Joshi, patron of the Conference and Madhya Pradesh Minister for Industries and Power.

Earlier inaugurating the conference on Saturday Mrs. Vijay Raje Scindia, MP called for the unification of all 'Panchaangs' (astrological calendars) lest there was variation in the dates of important festivals.



I

—Ms. Vasundhra

(We rationalists know the meaning of "I" too well. Any dictionary will give you its simple meaning as 'the word used in mentioning oneself' or the singular of the first personal pronoun. But for ages, the saints and pseudo philosophers have been wasting their precious lives in trying to find out other meanings of "I" and many innocent people waste their time in reading voluminous books on "I" and on discussing the significance of "I". Ms. Vasundhra, in this short skit, ridicules their arguments in her own lighter vein.-----Ed.)

Guru Avivekananda: (Summing up his discourse).

I hope you have now understood what is meant by 'I'. 'I' does not denote this body is made up of flesh, bones etc. It is the indivisible part of the universal Brahman. It is the eternal soul which calls itself as 'I'. Thus 'I' is different from 'my' body. I appeal to all of you to attach importance to the real 'I' and not to the bodies—after all bodies perish sooner or later.

(Next day on Marina Beach).

Prem- } Darling! You look so beautiful in
kumar } this sarree! I love you!

Priya: You love me or my sarree?

P.K.: Why, I love you too—and your lustrous locks of hair?

P.: Does it mean you love my hair and not me?

P.K.: Oh, silly—Your eyes, nose, lips are sweet too.

P.: Can I take it that you love my eyes, nose and lips and not me?

P.K.: Oh good god—I love every part of yours—I love every inch of your body.

P.: Even then it amounts to loving my body and not me.

P.K.: Oh, come on, my sweet girl. Now tell me are you not the same as your body?

P.: There you are. Didn't I ask you to come for yesterday's discourse? If only you had done it, you wouldn't be wasting my time like this with your utter ignorance of simple things like 'I' and body.

P.K.: Sorry dear—Can't you explain the difference in a nut shell?

P.: I'll try. I love your heart. I want you to love my heart—and not my body—understand?

P.K.: Not really. Both of us are medicos. And we know what a heart is. I agree it is the most important organ of our body. But should we love these hearts?

- P. : Yes—we have to—that is what Guruji said yesterday.
- P.K. : Suppose, my heart is transplanted to someone else. Will you then start loving that man?
- P. : Not exactly—but I'll continue to love 'your' heart by going with that man.
- P.K. : Will you not then be sad at my death?
- P. : Why should I? What I love is your 'heart' and not your body. By death only the body perishes.
- P.K. : If you have no concern for my body and if you do not want me to love your body—why should we marry at all? We can keep on loving each other's heart even without meeting each other daily.
- P. : Don't be silly, Prem! The marriage is for our two souls—not for our bodies.
- P.K. : If you go to him again, you are sure to go mad.
- P. : No dear—there were some convincing points in his theory. Just like 'my saree' I say 'my body'. Does it not mean, like saree, the body is different from 'me'.
- P.K. : That's nothing but usage. I say 'I am tall'. Tell me whether 'I' here denotes the soul or body?
- P. : ? ? ?
- P.K. : We say 'May his soul rest in peace'. Is it not clear that 'he' denotes his body?
- P. : But according to Guruji 'I' represents my soul and not my body.
- P.K. : 'My soul'?! What is meant by 'my' here? Soul's soul?
- P. : You are right I see your point. To Hell with Guruji! Thank you for your compliments for my hair, eyes, nose, lips and saree too.

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- P.K. : Is it? Without physical union of the bodies, you think the union of the two souls can bring forth a 'baby soul'?!
- P. : 'Baby soul' for the two souls? I am getting confused—Guruji didn't touch this point. He didn't even mention about male souls and female souls. I will check it up tomorrow.

Learning to be Lucky ?

by *Ms. Margaret Bhattu*

"Some people seem to attract good fortune, others never rise to the occasion and cannot but fail.....Perhaps we are confronted here with the deepest and most fundamental relation between man and his environment." Such a statement by a psychologist might lead one to assume that he is superstitious.

But is "good luck" a positive interaction between the human instinct and its environment? In laboratory experiments it has been found that certain subjects have a higher rate of success in identifying colours in sequence. And in subsequent sequences it turned out that these "lucky" ones again tended to guess more successfully than the "unlucky" ones. Certain factors evidently decided the outcome, but it was impossible to tell what those factors were.

"Superstition is a relative concept dependent on the state of scientific knowledge at any particular point of time. It may be that in future child-training manuals will

contain instructions helping parents to ensure that their off-spring will be endowed with the quality of 'luck'."

To the man in the street any occurrence which cannot be explained is put down to supernatural reasons. Which is why humans put faith in charms, talismans, and astrology. What we all search for is certainty. And to transform possibility into certainty calls for only a small degree of self-delusion.

"Why is it that bread always falls on the buttered side when you drop it?" demands one cheerful optimist. "Because we fear it will—therefore it does!"

By the same reasoning, says he, it should be possible to make it not happen. This can be achieved by positive thinking. You can then make the right cards fall into your hands, or even induce the dice to turn up the right numbers! Such twentieth century superstitions have names like parapsychology and psychokinesis.

Perhaps that gambler is most successful who is realist enough to grab a chance by the tail as it flicks past because he believes that every idea, every game, every concept has its own particular time.

This kind of acting upon his intuition involves doing something. It's a better alternative to sitting out on the side-lines with one's lucky charms simply hoping that things will be better if we think hard enough about them being better.

Dame Fortune or Lady Luck is so-called because she is fickle with her favours—a virtue by no means found only in women. But when she smiles, does she smile more on some than on others? Are unlucky ones born that way because of their stars or an immutable kismet? Or is there some psychology behind every disaster case?

Psychological studies prove that chance has very little to do with luck or unluck. Our best defence against disaster is intuition. But because of our mental outlook, our cultural and religious conditioning, along with a total lack of imagination, not all of us know how to preserve ourselves.

Have you noticed how stage and screen comedians are the most accident-prone people in the world? They have rotten luck. From start to finish it's one frantic run-around, out of one scrape, smack into another.

The actual psychology behind their predicament is that they are naked innocents let loose in a wicked and devious world without a clue to survival. They lack an instinct for self-preservation. We find them funny and laugh at their calamities.

But to be so vulnerable oneself is no laughing matter. And here is where we need to step in with some rational kind of strategies in order to help ourselves.

In a series of experiments carried out at Harvard University a number of people were assigned specific tasks. Half were privately told that the odds were strongly against them ever completing the job. The other half were assured it was easy and they would succeed.

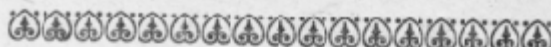
Result? The ones fore-warned about failure had slower reflexes and duller perception, and they quite overlooked the chances which might have helped them to success. They were conditioned to "bad luck". They expected to do poorly and so they did.

The other half, supported by a rational strategy which was positive in its thrust, came off with flying colours and proved themselves "lucky."

Now if you are thinking about the element of chance without the psychology, then isn't good luck just as possible as bad luck? Nobody has yet worked out a mathematical formula to prove that one happens more often than the other.

A man turns a corner and suddenly finds himself hooked up by a giant crane on a high-rise building which leaves him dangling ten stories above the street. But the odds are equally bright that he might hit the jackpot in the state lottery.

Worrying can make all the difference to the quality of one's life. "True success is overcoming the fear of being unsuccessful," says Paul Sweeney. But we all know people who must consult their panchaangs, establish the direction in which they can safely travel the mode of transport, and what they can wear as lucky stones, lucky numbers, or the lucky colour for the day.



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Anybody who needs to be that well-armed against misfortune is badly down on himself. As psychologist Karl Menninger established "people with a marked tendency to being unlucky are people who are not happy with themselves."

Experiments repeatedly show that accident-prone (unlucky) people either wish to punish themselves, or have feelings of guilt about something. An accident squares off a small private account with themselves.

Now there are accidental accidents in which a person has no choice but to be a victim. But we are not concerned here with train smash-ups. We are concerned with those personal mishaps which seem to decide the general direction of people's lives, convincing them that their kismet is all wrong, that they were born under a malevolent star, or are suffering punishment from having offended god.

"Luck is largely a result of taking appropriate action. When we're passive, or when we don't take sufficient charge of our affairs, we're victims of all kinds of bad luck," writes one author.

The reasons for such passivity are numerous and depend on one's cultural background. Passivity comes from a refusal to act on one's own behalf because of belief in karma. It might stem from the conviction that whatever happens is because God wills it and to go against that will would be a sin. Then there is a fear of social censure where herd pressures make people timid by forcing them to conform to restrictions of caste and community and sex as in the case of women particularly. Passivity also comes from superstitious fear where all initiative is paralysed by an incomplete understanding

of natural phenomena. People with poor self-image are more likely to be victims of "bad luck" because they lack the courage of their convictions.

There is a strong rational strategy for being "lucky". The key lies in strong self-motivation, a refusal to be ether-directed, and the cultivation of self-sufficiency.

Within such a context "good luck" appear exactly what they are—subjective experiences having no connection with external life mystical numbers, the stars, times of the moon, auspicious and inauspicious kalas, and the presence or absence of charms and talismans. △



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An Interview with Mr. Justice V. M. Tarkunde

(A Profile)



It was indeed a pleasant experience for your Editor to meet Mr. V. M. Tarkunde, ex-judge of the Bombay High Court and a thorough-bred rationalist. In spite of his busy schedule as a lawyer, politician and editor, he found time to communicate with FREETHOUGHT readers. Apart from receiving his greetings, readers will find his life and work a source of great inspiration.

BACKGROUND:

Born on 3rd July 1909, in Maharashtra, young Tarkunde studied in Poona with distinction standing first in the matriculation examination. He graduated in Agricultural Economics which, incidentally, helped him to appreciate and understand India that is so predominantly agricultural. He later became a Barrister.

RADICAL HUMANIST AND EDITOR:

Early in his career, he became a joint Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party. He joined the founder of Radical Humanism, Mr. M. N. Roy in 1939

and worked with him as the General Secretary of the Radical Democratic Party. In fact his devotion was such that he became a whole timer in Radical Democratic Party, discontinuing his legal practice between 1942 and 1948. Then the party was dissolved in deference to Roy's views that party politics was not congenial to the stabilization and functioning of a genuine democracy. However, Radical Humanist movement succeeded the party and Mr. Tarkunde continued to be active.

Radical Humanist Movement which had no organisation since it was founded, was given an organisational shape when it became Radical Humanist Association in November, 1969. The mantle of presidentship naturally fell to Mr. Tarkunde's lot. From April, 1970, the 'Radical Humanist', a weekly journal published from Calcutta, was converted into a monthly. Mr. Tarkunde has been shouldering the responsibility of editorship of this journal apart from undertaking its financial viability (till it becomes self supporting).

NON-OFFICIAL COMMUNIST:

A rationalist from almost his 17th year, Justice Tarkunde considers himself a Marxist first. In his words, he is a non-official communist and believes that the masses care for freedom and cherish democracy. Humanism is a post-Marxian Philosophy, a stage after Marxism ceased to be a dogma, according to the ex-judge. Radical Humanism does not believe that ideas are determined by economic aspects alone. To improve the economic conditions of the masses, they need a better society which has to evolve from below. While he concedes that Radical Humanism is a middle class philosophy, Mr. Tarkunde contends that communism is no different in this regard. He firmly believes that democracy is a sheet anchor which should not be destroyed culturally or economically.

JUDGE AND LAWYER :

Mr. Tarkunde resumed his practice in the Bombay High Court and became a judge of that court in 1957. After 12 years as Judge, he resigned the post in 1969 and began practice as a senior advocate in the Supreme Court at New Delhi. He continues to practise and readers will be happy to know that he will be taking up Ms. Soma Sublok's case as and when the same comes up before the court in Delhi.

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY :

In 1974, Mr. Tarkunde, in co-operation with Jayaprakash Narayan, started the Citizens for Democracy for defending and strengthening democracy through popular education and conventions. Justice Tarkunde is still its General Secretary. This organisation did valuable work in protecting civil rights and liberties. Throughout the period of emergency, Mr. Tarkunde appeared in a large number of cases (without charging fees) to defend civil liberties and to fight punitive detentions under the MISA. He brought to the notice of the society the abominable conditions in Indian jails and the miserable treatment meted out to detenus. He upheld press freedom, whether dailies or periodicals.

REPORT ON NAXALITES

He is also the Chairman of the Civil Rights Committee which investigates into the deaths of alleged naxalites who were reported by the police to have died in 'encounters'. According to the widely-publicised interim report of the Committee, persons labelled as naxalites were in fact shot down by police in cold blood.

POLITICS WITHOUT POWER

Radical Humanists, though they have much in common with J.P.'s Total Revolutionaries, do not believe in capturing political power. They believe in educating the masses so that people could be helped to help themselves. Mr. Tarkunde as Chairman/Trustee of the Indian Renaissance Institute (founded by Mr. M.N. Roy) set up an expert committee and published in May 1977 a plan of economic development called People's Plan II dealing with the economic development of India.

INTERNATIONAL AWARD

In recognition of the services rendered by Mr. Tarkunde to the Humanist Movement the International Humanist Award 1978 was made to him. The International Humanist and Ethical Union has for the first time conferred this honour on an Indian. This award, made once in four years, had earlier been made, among others, to Bertrand Russell and Julian Huxley. The citation states that the award has been made to Mr. Tarkunde in recognition of his contribution to the 'defence of democracy, human rights and human values in India'.

In addition to the other pressing demands on his time, Mr. Tarkunde shoulders the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance Association.

At the age of 70, he is so active and agile that younger persons would envy him. His simplicity, modesty and readiness to help would endear him to many an intellectual.

Biogenesis and Re-incarnation of Souls.

—Kalanathan, Kodelundi

(There was an article 'What the Dying See' in Blitz dated 10-7-1976 by John White. In this article, which was reported to be based on a study of the dying, the author tried to establish the old belief that human personality survived death. The physical study of the dying man to assess life after death itself is a contradiction and it will not provide correct result as reported in the conclusion of the article. The author of this article has tried to reinforce this idea by applying scientific facts to religion

Ed.)

Vivekananda said: "Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to science and external phenomena, to be applied to the 'scene' of Religion? In my opinion, this must be so, and the sooner it is done, the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigation, then, it had been a useless unworthy superstition and the sooner it goes, the better.

Rationalists, even at present, are afraid of science, because they believe that the

theory of the supernatural will lose its holiness by the critical and analytical attack of Natural Science. They even argue that the supernatural cannot be measured or studied by the objective methods of science as the supernatural is to be understood by the power of the 'sixth-sense'.

Actually the blind irrationalists are properly admonished by the above cited prudent words of Vivekananda.

WHAT IS SOUL ?

'Soul is Brahma or God'—Says Nirambopanished. 'Soul never dies, nor is it born'—Says Gita II-20). According to it, soul enters the body at birth, and leaves it at death. Soul is immortal. Soul changes body, as we change dress (Gita II-22).

The three important alleged characteristics of soul are :

1. Indivisible unit,
2. Persisting identity and
3. Separate existence.

It is claimed that the body shows the symptoms of life just after the entrance of a soul into it. So also the person is supposed to die at the moment of departure of the soul from the body. It is this soul with its above cited attributes plus the merits and demerits of the individual in which it was residing, that visits hell or heaven.

According to Hinduism, the soul of man may enter even the body of animals and other creatures. But Christian and Islamic souls should wait upto 'Khayamat' or the universal deluge, for the final judgement. What a prolonged bother some apprenticeship !

BIOGENETIC LAW :

According to biogenesis, 'every living cell is produced from a pre-existing living

cell'. A new amoeba is derived from an existing and living amoeba only. According to the theory of evolution, living things were formed out of non-living things. Artificial synthesis of DNA by Dr. H. G. Khorana and others have verified the biochemical theory on origin of life. Nowhere in the theory of origin, and development of life is mentioned the function of a soul. This itself shows that this concept of soul is unnecessary in the field of science, and therefore it is non-scientific. The concept of soul is really the product and reflection of the dreaded dreams of the barbarians or savages who cannot understand the phenomenon of dreaming.

REPRODUCTION IN AMOEBA :

In binary division, the nucleus of a grown up amoeba splits into two, and it is followed by the equal division of the protoplasm. Each daughter cell gets equal division of the material of the parental body, and they develop into new individuals.

If the phenomenon of life is an index to the presence of soul, then, amoeba has a soul. In binary division, the same individual divides. So the 'indivisible' soul should have divided into two. This idea runs against the concept of 'indivisible unity' of soul. As each part of amoeba is having life, at all periods during division, there is no scope for the entrance of a new soul. Therefore, it is clear that the soul should have divided into two, to provide each cell with a soul. Contradiction is the essence of all divine philosophies at all periods. The theory of reincarnation of soul is an example.

REPRODUCTION IN MAN :

Sperms are, merely living, independent male cells. Ovum is also an independent, living female cell. Both of them have life and therefore should have soul. Living sperms and living ova combine in the womb and a living zygote is produced. The zygote

divides into 2, 4, 8 and so on and ultimately a new child is born.

In all these stages, at all moments, the sperm, ovum and the zygote have life. Therefore, there is no chance for an external soul to enter into the body. Then, the life of a child is not due to the entrance of a new soul. Really, the living child is produced by a pre-existing living being.

If it is claimed that the sperm has a soul which is part of the male, what happens to it when it combines with the soul of the ovum which is part of the maternal body. Two souls conjugate to produce a new girl or boy! which soul decides the sex? Is it difficult to perceive that 'separate existence' and 'persisting identity' of soul are questioned? These concepts have no meaning before the facts of nature.

HEAVEN OR HELL :

We have seen that no soul has entered into a body at its birth to make it alive. If no soul entered the body at its origin or birth how can 'it' go out of the same body at death? Yes, the concept that death occurs at the departure of the soul from the body is a naked metaphysical lie. Therefore, even if there exists a heaven or a hell, it will not affect living beings on earth. The religious edifice of ignorance and superstitions crumbles by the shock imparted by the violent currents of scientific facts.

The concept of soul and reincarnation is the backbone of Hinduism — according to Swami Chinmayananda (Kathopanishads). This is also true in the case of many other religions. Is it then that the backbone of all religions is broken by biogenesis?

Science, with its powerful weapons of objective enquiry will, eventually, succeed in apping the foundation of all religions.

Marital Practices in Mahabharata.

—Ms. Anusha, Madras

In the context of Draupadi's becoming the common wife of the five Pandava brothers the Mahabharata refers to varying marital practices.

PROMISCUOUS WOMEN

In early times, women were promiscuous and uncontrolled. Later, it was held that all "impurities" were washed away with each menstruation. (This led to the practice indicated elsewhere of sages 'borrowing' a wife, for the instant production of a son, and returning her to the 'husband' after menstruation. This custom was put an end to by the irate son of a woman who was forced against her will to follow the practice).

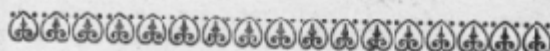
SHORTCUT TO BEGET A SON

It was subsequently prescribed that it would be 'dharma' for a woman to have only one husband. If the union was issueless, a woman may, with the consent of her husband, get another worthy person to beget a son on her ('niyoga') there being no sense of carnal enjoyment here. It would be only for the laudable purpose of continuing

the family line on a critical occasion. (But how can there ever be intercourse without carnal pleasure? It is impossible for any one to beget a child trying to copulate without thinking of carnal pleasures).

WHO IS A 'PROSTITUTE'?

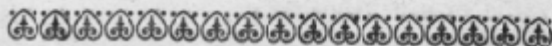
We see that according to the Mahabharata a woman is allowed to have sex with a second person to beget a son. If through any circumstance a woman has carnal relation with a third person, she would have to atone for it. A fourth man in her life would make her a "fallen" woman, a fifth person would render her a 'prostitute'. BUT MEN WERE ALWAYS FREE TO BE POLYGAMOUS — in fact it was favoured among rulers for political reasons, and among the lower classes for economic considerations.



HONEST WOMAN JAILED.

Israeli bank employee Dinah Gilad was jailed because she refused to report for army reserve duty, and she did that because she objected to the law passed last year which grants exemption to women if they declare they are religiously observant. Many girls who really are not at all religious take advantage of this. The arrest of Dinah Gilad led to a demonstration in front of the Defence Ministry. Its participants demanded an end to the persecution of those who do not want to serve in the army and do not wish to pretend that they are religious.

Kudos to the Israeli Women who had risen against the Zionist theocracy.



WHERE BROTHERS HAD A COMMON WIFE :

Bhoumaasmi the daughter of emperor Sibi chose in a Swayamvara five brothers, sons of the 'Rajarishi' Nitantu as her husbands, the main reason being the unity, love and utter lack of jealousy among them apart from their being equally accomplished. This was socially approved. 'Maarishaa (vaarshi) the daughter of a sage, lived with ten brothers. Jailaa is said to have lived with all the Saptarishis. These are exceptions to the ordinary rule of dharma.

HOW DRAUPATI WAS BORN :

According to Mahabharata the story of Draupati's 'previous life' goes like this.

Nalaayanl, after having proved her loyalty and dedication to her "apparently" decrepit and leprous sage-husband Moudh-galya got that sage to assume five different handsome human forms and enjoyed the sensual pleasures for long. Then the sage assumed the single charming form of his own and gave pleasure to her. At last, he desired to give up his household life betake himself to austerities, but Nalayini, still lustfull, protested. So he cursed her to be reborn on earth as the princess of Paanchaala and live with five husbands so that her lust could be satisfied by not one but five men. Shocked at this Nalaayani prayed to Lord Siva, under taking severe austerities, for a good husband in the next birth. But as she repeated her request five times, the Lord said that she would have five heroic husbands, as preordained in the interests of the celestials. He however added that in her case alone would pleasure, yoga and tapas be the three stands of 'dharma'.

Thus was born draupati, the common wife of five pandavas !

Family Planning

Not long ago China set a target to limit the annual population growth rate to 1 per cent by 1980. Last year the rate fell to less than 1 per cent in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and in eight provinces. In Sichuan, China's most populous province, it was only 0.8 per cent. And more men in this province are being sterilized than in other provinces. In some places this is being done by giving injections to block the spermatid duct instead of by surgery.

It is expected that the annual population growth rate will drop to less than 1 per cent in more provinces this year, and that those with a higher rate will do better. Take Guangshan County in Henan Province for instance. The population growth rate dropped from 3.52 per cent in 1972 to 0.513 per cent in 1977. The decline is chiefly due to ideological work to raise people's understanding of the importance of family planning. As a result, 85 per cent of the women in their child-bearing years are now using contraceptives. And more men are being sterilized than women.

Contraceptives, sterilization and induced abortion are free all over the country. There is no social pressure against women who want to have an abortion. Some elderly people were strongly against it in the 1950s when abortions were available on a large scale for the first time. They claimed that to have an abortion was the same as killing a baby. Such opposition died down as people learnt more about science. But some still worried that the popularization of induced abortions might lead to licentiousness. In fact, licentiousness is a problem related to the social system and social morals and not the popularization of induced abortions. A few unmarried women get pregnant in the urban areas but they are also given a free abortion at a hospital. Since there are no private practitioners in China, induced abortions at a high price are out of question.

—Courtesy—Beijing Review

NATIONAL DIETY :

It is a pity that a Cabinet Minister of Kerala should have suggested to Central Government to declare 'Lord' Ayyappa as a 'National Deity' for our Secular India. I.R.A. has however promptly protested to the Kerala Chief Minister.

The correspondence exchanged between Mr. Y. A. Lokhandwala, President, I.R.A. and Mr. P. K. Vasudevan Nair, Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala is reproduced hereunder.

Sir,

You are aware that Indian Rationalist Association some how carries on its activities for liberation of the mind of men, women and children from superstitious beliefs, myths and miracles on its very meagre resources.

Nonetheless, we could not ignore your appeal for funds for the relief of flood-stricken people of Kerala and, hence, we are hereby offering our very humble token donation of only Rs. 100 (Rupees one hundred) towards it, through a Demand Draft payable to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

May we take this opportunity to inform you of our strong resentment at the utterings of one of your Cabinet Colleagues, as reported in some newspapers some days ago, that the so-called Lord Ayyappa be declared by the Central Government as a National Deity. Could there be any more absurd proposal than this?

All rationally and scientifically disposed people in India and elsewhere are equally distressed by learning that even those who vow by Marxist Philosophy and Scientific Socialism go on pilgrimage of this so-called Ayyappa, which has, surprisingly, no mention in any of the religious scriptures of the world, not even in vedas or other Hindu mythologies.

The motto of creating scientific temper amongst the people of India, as embodied in

the Constitution, does empower every State Government in India for taking necessary action to ascertain and verify whether several miraculous claims propagated for and on behalf of either any inanimate idolled deity or any animate baba, mulla, moulvi, priest or saint stands impartial scientific test. If not stringent action be taken against all those who directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly perpetrate such hoax on gullible people and thereby exploit their sentiments and feelings.

Hope you would please take prompt and effective action soon in this regard.

We are enclosing herewith a copy of our public statement entitled "Cow — Slaughter Ban — A Sinister move of obscurantist Forces Against Kerala and Bangal Governments" for your information and comments.

Y. A. LOKHANDWALA.

Your letter of 15, January 1979 has been received along with the Demand Draft for Rs. 100. First of all I thank you for your thoughtful action in sending the contribution to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.

As regards the reported suggestion to declare Lord Ayyappa as national diety, I point out that every one of us is free to express one's own opinion and that an idea which may seem absurd to one may appear to be perfectly reasonable to another. It is open to you to propagate the rationalistic ideas and principles and to lead a crusade against superstition and religious obscurantism. But the fight should be purely at the level of ideas and state regulations against any religious trends would only make matters confounded. I would therefore advise you to carry on your ideological and intellectual fight against the forces of reaction and religious revivalism without having recourse to the coercive power of the State.

P. K. VASUDEVAN NAIR.

NO NEED TO MENTION 'RELIGION'. Dr. AMBEDKAR'S BIRTH DAY CELEBRATIONS :

Frequently we receive complaints from some of our members stating that they are being forced to declare one religion or other in many application forms including those for the admission of the children in schools and colleges. The matter has been referred to Dr. P. C. Chunder, Hon'ble Minister for Education by Mr. Y. A. Lokhandwala, President of I.R.A. and the full text of the Minister's letter is reproduced hereunder. If anybody has any difficulty with any institution, they are requested to quote the Minister's letter and refrain from mentioning the name of the religion by birth, against the column 'Religion'. The reply can be given as "Rationalist" or "NIL".

My dear Shri Lokhandwala,

I have received your letter of March 10, 1979 along with its enclosures. I do not think failure to mention any particular religion listed by you will disqualify your son. As far as I know atheism comes within the scope of the word 'religion'. Strictly atheism means one who does not believe in God and there are some religions in India which initially did not encourage belief in God. Secularism does not mean negation of religions. Sometimes for the sake of statistics and other purposes it may be necessary to have some information about one's religion if there is any.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) (P. C. Chunder)

The birthday of Dr. Ambedkar was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the Punjab on 14-4-79. The Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab took out a huge procession at Jullundur in the noon. At night there was a mammoth public gathering on the ground of the Ambedkar Bhavan. Poet and radio artistes participated.

The speakers highlighted the Mission of Dr. Ambedkar. Among those who spoke on the occasion were Ms. Soma Sublok, M.A. (Executive Member of the Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab and member of I.R.A.)

Dr. Surendra Ajnat (The President of Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab and Secretary of I.R.A., Punjab) Mr. L.R. Balley, Editor Bheem Patrika and general Secretary, All India Samata Sainik Dal and Mr. R. C. Paul, Advocate, General Secretary of the Society.

The speakers called upon the audience to adopt the atheistic and rationalistic way of life and strive for changing this exploitation based social system.

On 18-4-79, at Banga the Ravid as Nojwan Sabha, Tehsil Nawan Shehar took out a huge procession to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Ambedkar which culminated in a public meeting. Mr. L. R. Balley, Dr. Surendra Ajnat and others spoke on the occasion. These functions provided good opportunities to spread the message of Atheism/Rationalism in Punjab.

SAUDI TALORS CAN'T TOUCH WOMEN

JEDDAH (Saudi Arabia)

Tailors have been prohibited from taking women's measurements because it is incompatible with Islamic law, an interior Ministry decree said today.

Children's Corner

HINDU SCRIPTURES RETOLD - No. 5 MARKANDEYA

—Ms. Vasundhra

In answer to their unceasing penance, Lord Shiva decided to bless the childless Mrikanda and Marudgati with the son they longed so desperately for. But, before granting this boon, Lord Shiva asked Mrikanda a question—Did Mrikanda desire a theist son who would live a short time - or did he prefer a son who would live long, but who would be a Rationalist. Unhesitatingly the sage replied that he wished for a theist son.

A short while later, the child Markandeya was born and when he grew to boyhood, his father told him of his destiny. He advised the lad to live his few years to the fullest and dedicate them to the worship of Lord Shiva. Immediately, Markandeya went southward, where he set up a Shiva Lingam which he worshipped

daily with unwavering devotion. Each of the seven great rishis, blessed him with a long life. But when Vasishtha glimpsed the child's short life span as indicated on his forehead, he was stunned. He conferred with the shocked rishis and together they appealed to Lord Brahma to help the lad they loved. But Brahma assured them that Lord Shiva would take care of his follower when the time of peril came.

When Markandeya was sixteen, his life span was over. Yama, the God of Death, came to lead him away with the death noose. So intent was the child in the worship of Shiva, that he asked Yama to wait awhile. Yama laughed contemptuously. Death, he said, would not wait for anyone or anything. With these words, he cast the death noose around the child's neck.

Then Markandeya embraced the Shiva Lingam and clung to it desperately, Yama dragged away both the boy and the Shiva Lingam. Markandeya thus paid the price for his father's choice of a theist son! That was the end of Lord Shiva too. !! Δ

Guru-Sishya-No 5.

By. YASODH



BOOK REVIEW :

"Freethought in the United States"

A descriptive Bibliography by
Marshall G. Brown & Gordon
Stein

Most liberal forms of Christianity and Judaism now preach what freethinkers were condemned for advocating 100 years ago. Ideas that were heretical in their day—birth control, evolution, women's rights, separation of church and state, abolition of slavery—are now commonly accepted. The free thought movement has been a constant and steadfast force for maintaining and strengthening basic American constitutional principles. "Free thought in the United States" is a useful Bibliography that illustrates how many of our current ideas about the world have been clearly expressed, often for the first time, by America's freethinkers.

Freethought in the United States is the first guidebook to literature of freethought ever published. Freethought consists of writings that are critical of orthodox or organized religion. Included under this heading would be atheism, agnosticism, rationalism, humanism and deism. This book is organized chronologically, beginning with the European antecedents of deism. The topics covered are deism in America, popular

freethought, the Golden Age of Freethought and freethought in the twentieth century. Within each of these chapters, there are sections on publication, organizations, individuals, publishers and conservative freethought. At the end of each chapter's text there is a checklist of titles giving full bibliographic information. There are four appendices: one dealing with the contribution of freethought in the United States by the many ethnic groups which were a part of the movement, another with the locations of major freethought collections in libraries, a third with theses and dissertations of free thought history and biography, and a fourth with freethought in Canada.

The definitive history of freethought in the United States has yet to be written. This guide book, through the maze of a previously uncharted area, should prove useful to those future investigators who attempt to examine more fully one of the most fascinating yet neglected areas of American history.

MARSHALL G. BROWN, a former secondary school principal and supervisor of adult education, has studied the history of freethought for more than forty years. He is the author of *Genealogy of the Harvey Family of Garrett County, Maryland*. GORDON STEIN is a physiologist and editor. His interest in freethought extends over ten years: he has compiled one of the largest collections of freethought books in private hands. His publications include *Robert G. Ingersoll: A Checklist* and numerous articles for scholarly journals. He is at work on a history of blasphemy prosecutions.

This excellently brought out American book is a must for anyone interested in contemporary growth of freethought in a western country foremost in rationalism. △

(Contd. from page 138)

the film. [It is highly unlikely that the filming could have taken place without the knowledge of the sex-maniac and self-styled "Bhagwan".] **WHAT IS MORE PROBABLE IS THAT THE DUTCH COMPANY COULD HAVE BEEN THE AGENTS OF RAJNEESH TO BRING IN A FRESH WAVE OF WESTERN FOLLOWERS TO HIS POONA ASHRAM WHEREBY HE COULD MINT MORE MONEY.** Our Government should voice the strongest protest to the Dutch Government and probe the Ashram activities. The absolute unconcern which our Government shows to the unwanted Ashram activities will only make the Ashram a hotbed of anti-national activities and C.I.A. agents!

* * *

RACISM IN BRITAIN:

The problem of coloured immigrants who come from the former British colonies has become most acute in Great Britain. Unemployment among the immigrants has increased more than two and a half times over the last five years.

Quarters in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds have become real ghettos where the majority of a two-million army of dark-skinned British nationals live. There are no elementary conveniences in their apartment houses, no hospitals, no schools. The walls of buildings are smeared with racist catchwords.

Over 100 attacks on immigrants have been made in London's 'coloured' ghetto over the last two years, which led to serious injuries and even to death of innocent people.

* * *

LATE SOMALAL SHIROIA

The public meeting convened at Gujarati Forbes Sabha Hall, Bombay, on the 2nd March, 1979 by the Panchmahal Seva Samaj (Bombay), Bombay Rationalist Association, etc., and presided over by Mr. Jayantibhai Shukla, Editor, Janmahoomi daily, expressed its profound grief at the sad and sudden demise of Shri Somalal Shiroria and paid hearty tributes to his sincere selfless-service for five decades to the people of Panchmahals District as well as that of Gujarat State.

Shri Somalal Shiroria had sacrificed his lucrative profession for dedicating his time and energy for organising youths, Kisans, Gumastas and students for the movement for freedom from foreign rule and in doing so he preferred to suffer financial deprivations and untold hardships and encountered imprisonment thrice, in 1930, 1940 and 1942. He died almost a pauper leaving dependents behind.

Shri Somalal Shiroria had imbibed principles of unadulterated scientific socialism, which generated in him the firm conviction in ahimsa and he lived upto those principles till his death.

His life and work were like a light house beaconing people against hazards of obscurantism, religious fanaticism and superstitious beliefs which had inspired number of youths.

Hence, his death at a time when obscurantist forces have spread their tentacles all around is more seriously felt.

The meeting appealed to the people especially youths of the country to imbibe Somalal's views and spirit or service in their lives.

△

Test for Reason No. 20

SEVAKS AND SEVIKAS

There are 70 inmates in a Guruji's Ashram. From the following information can you find out how many of these are unmarried Sevikas and of them how many are above the age of 25 years.

1. There are altogether 30 sevikas.
2. Totally 30 inmates are married.
3. 24 inmates are above 25 years of age.
4. 19 married inmates are above 25 years of which 7 are sevaks
5. 12 sevaks are above 25 years of age.
6. 15 sevaks are married

RULES : 1. The entries Should be received on or before 26—3—79.

2. There is a prize of books to be sent to the winner. If there is more than one correct entry the prize will be divided equally.
3. Readers are requested to quote their Membership Number or Subscription Number.

Solution for TEST FOR REASON - No. 19.

The Saibaba rumour will spread in a geometric progression. It will spread at the following speed (app.)

Entire population of Delhi (4 million)- within 5½ hours.

Entire population of India (600 million) within 7½ hours.

Entire population of the world (4000 million)- within 8 hours.

The following who have sent correct answers share the prize.

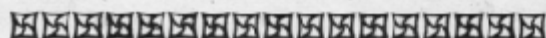
Mr. K.K. Kishore, Zami, Golvepalli
(A P.)

Mr. R. Lakshminarayanan, Bangalore
(Karnataka).

Ms. P. Meenakumari, M.Sc., Madurai
(Tamilnadu),

Mr. G. R. Menon, Ahmedabad
(Gujarat).

Mr. Nelson Gomez, Cochin, (Kerala).



Cover Page Report :

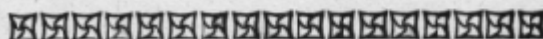
BURGLAR ALARM FOR TIRUMALA

Tirupati, March 2 (UNI)- An electronic eye and a burglar alarm have been installed at the 'Bangaru Vakili' (golden threshold) of the Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala.

An Additional Superintendent of Police with a platoon has also been stationed at the temple.

These measures are being taken following the recent burglary at the Simhachalam temple in Visakhapatnam district.

...The Indian Express.



I. R. A. ENDOWMENT FUND

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions to the fund:

1. Mr. M.K. Ratish, Kottayam	---	---	Rs. 50-00
2. Mr. M.V. Ramamurty, Hyderabad	---	---	Rs. 50-00
			Rs. 100-00
As per April 1979 issue	---	---	4, 134-15
			4, 234-15

New Members

We heartily welcome the following New Members to I. R. A.

Membership No.	Name	Place
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M 490	Mr. S. Thirugana Sambandan, B.E.	Madras (Tamil Nadu)
M-491	Mr. V.N.K. Kumar, B.Sc., A.M.I.E., M.B.A	Bangalore (Karnataka)
△ Converted from Ordinary Membership.		

A. Suryanarayana
General Secretary, I. R. A.

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- | | |
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2. To avoid heavy VPP charges please order books with full advance.

3. For price list of Telugu & Tamil books please write to :

IRA. 28/18, Pantheon Road, MADRAS-6 0 008.

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